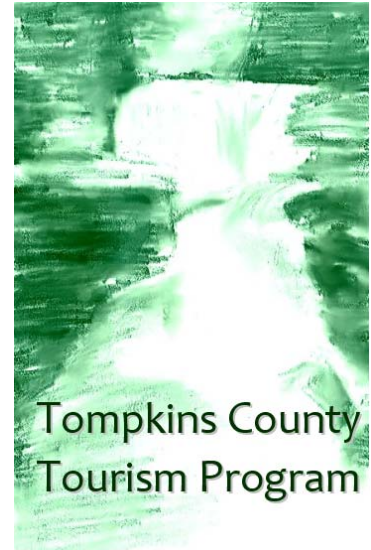


# COVER PAGE

## 2016 Budget Request Form

### Tompkins County Tourism Program



#### I. BASIC INFORMATION

Program: Tourism Project Grants

Applicant Organization: STPB Tourism Project Grant Committee

Contact Person: Tom Knipe

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2016 Request: \$80,700 Product Development or Marketing? Product

Year	Tourism Program Allocation**	\$ Change	% Change	% of Program Budget*
2011	\$62,017			100%
2012	\$69,103	\$7,086	11.4%	100%
2013	\$76,013	\$6,910	10.0%	100%
2014	\$78,300	\$2,287	3.30%	100%
2015	\$78,300	\$0	0%	100%
<b>2016</b>	<b>\$80,700</b>	<b>\$2,400</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Enter the % of the total program budget that would come from the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

\*\* Enter modified budget amounts where applicable.

#### II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Describe the program in two or three sentences.

Tourism Project Grants support tourism-generating single events or projects that have been in existence for more than three years in a row.

#### III. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

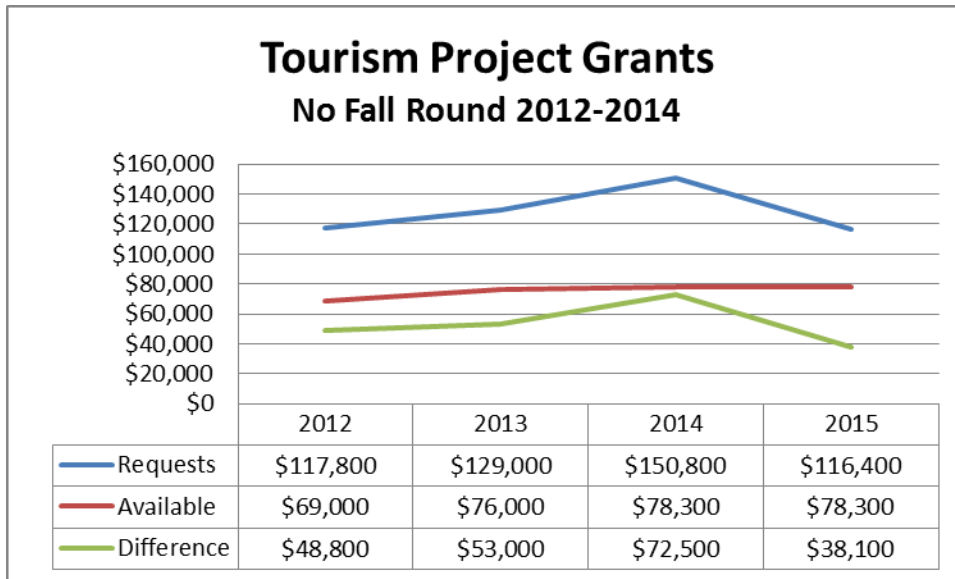
Very briefly state overarching challenges and opportunities related to your program (current or anticipated in 2015) and describe you how propose to address them.

2014 applications requested \$150,843 for an available \$78,300. 2015 applications requested \$116,400 for an available \$78,300. This has been a consistent trend for the past four years, with significantly less money available for the year than requested in the spring round. As such, there has also been no fall round for Tourism Project Grants in the past four years (2012-2015). The Tourism Project Grant program awards grants to projects that will generate significant tourism to Tompkins County and support other STPB Strategic Plan goals, thus making the funding a priority for the STPB.

#### **IV. BUDGET NARRATIVE**

Describe how you propose to use the requested funds. You may also use this section to expand on your answers to questions II and III.

Funds will be used to support Tourism Project Grant proposals. Demand for the funds are likely to increase due to the efforts of the Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator and the transition of New Tourism Initiative projects into the TPG category.



#### **V. PROGRAM GOALS**

List and describe program goals for 2016, using the sample format. For each goal listed, describe how you will measure achievement of that goal (you may list more than one measure of achievement for each goal). This will require you to consider appropriate numerical measures and baselines.

Also, which goals and critical actions of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan does this program respond to, and how do your proposed program goals align with goals stated in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan?

Goal 1: Increase visitation (including overnight stays) and visitor spending associated with grant-funded projects.

Measure of achievement: CVB findings, comparison of baseline figures to grantee reports regarding ROI.

Goal 2: Increase “packaging” of tourism projects with hotel properties, restaurants and other venues.

Measure of achievement: Increase in packaging in grant proposals.

Goal 3: Promote financial sustainability of events and festivals that have received ongoing financial support from tourism project grants.

Measure of achievement: Reduced requests from multi-year funded projects, eventually phasing out requests completely.

Goal 4: Increase the relative investment in projects with potential to expand activity during priority times such as winter and mid-week.

Measure of achievement: ratio of priority vs non-priority investment of grant funds.

Although the program is limited by the content of the applications, Tourism Project Grants can potentially support all the goals of the 2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan. The TPG Review Committee strives to award funds strategically supporting as many Strategic Plan goals as possible.

## **VI. ACHIEVEMENTS**

Please describe your most significant program achievements during 2014 and the first quarter (January through March) of 2015. If possible, please use this as an opportunity to restate your program goals for the 2014 and 2015 budget years and describe progress towards these goals.

The TPG program aided the vibrancy and growth of many projects and exhibitions. (See proposals for specific examples.) The program also completed its first year of using an online grant application and review process, gaining efficiency and professionalism, and also combined the review process for these grants with Tourism Project Grants and Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants for the first time. The online platform also supported easy creation of reports and analysis. The Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator aided applicants at all points of the process and evaluated applicant reports.

Within the past year, we have phased out funding to a few event-related grant recipients including Cayuga Trails 50, the Cayuga Lake Triathlon and the Dragon boat Festival. All of these events are still happening. We have also reduced funding to several other events which have received significant annual awards for several years, while holding the line on increasing award amounts to others, except in cases where the event itself is in a growth phase. Events which have seen reductions in funding include the Celtic Festival and Ithaca Shakespeare. These changes represent a 'ramp-down' of funding to long-standing events which has been signaled for a few years and is necessary to be able to continue growing the number of projects in the community which can be supported and nurtured by this program. It is expected that these funding reductions will be implemented without significant negative impacts on the tourism aspects of these events.

Also, an in-depth program evaluation will be performed in 2015.

## **VII. IMPACT OF FUNDING**

What would be the specific impact of receiving less funding than you are requesting? For example, what are the things that you would like to be able to do that you would not be able to do? What would be removed or reduced from your plans if you had to make do with less than requested?

Applicants will receive less funding for projects and exhibitions, potentially negatively impacting tourism in Tompkins County. This is an important program to be able to continue nurturing events and projects which have been launched with tourism program support.

## **VIII. COLLABORATION**

What steps have you taken and/or what new steps do you propose to take to collaborate, coordinate, partner, and share information and resources between your program(s) and other room-tax funded programs?

The Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator delivers coordinated applicant workshops for several grant categories including NTI. The CVB aids applicants in developing marketing plans. In 2015 in preparation for the 2016 grant cycle, we are working with the Tompkins Festivals program to integrate the results of post-event assessments performed by the Festivals Program into grant reporting and applications for events which have received tourism grants.

#### **IX. STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES (optional)**

Tourism Project Grants, compared to New Tourism Initiative Grants and Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants, is the most important program of the three to which to direct any additional available funds. The ratio of available funding compared to the high value of requests coupled with the lack of a fall grant round for the past several years (which may hide some additional demand) indicates this.

Attachments:

See NTI budget request.